

Minutes of the Regular Meeting February 10, 2004

Twin Pines Senior and Community Center, 1223 Ralston Avenue

STUDY SESSION

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Warden, Feierbach, Mathewson, Bauer, Metropulos

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: City Manager Kersnar, Assistant City Manager Rich, City Attorney Savaree, Public Works Director Davis, Community Development Director Ewing, Information Services Manager Harnish, Information Specialist DeRouen, City Clerk Cook.

Demonstration of City Web Site Enhancement: Belmont Municipal Code

City Clerk Cook described the features of the new version of the Belmont Municipal Code now available on the City's web site. She explained that the previous version did not have search capabilities, which the new subscription service does. She demonstrated the use of the new electronic code, and noted that the cost per update will be less than producing multiple copies of the printed version.

In response to Councilmember Warden regarding the zoning code, Community Development Director Ewing stated that staff was looking into a similar electronic subscription service for that document. It was noted that the Zoning Code is managed and produced separately from the Municipal Code.

Councilmembers concurred in their support for an electronic version of the zoning code as well.

Demonstration of City Web Site Enhancement: Orthophotos (aerial photography)

GIS Coordinator/Informational Specialist Kevin DeRouen stated that the City had recently utilized a service to update the aerial photographs of the City. He stated that high-resolution digital photos were taken throughout the city in late summer of 2003. He explained that the photos will be used by staff to update property lines, and to inventory sidewalks, curbs and gutters, and parking stalls. He further explained that the police department will use the photos for tactical purposes, and that code

enforcement could use the system for comparison purposes with previous photos. He noted that the new photos would be used with the existing GIS system as an overlay.

REGULAR MEETING

CALL TO ORDER - 7:32 P.M.

ROLL CALL

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Warden, Feierbach, Mathewson, Bauer, Metropulos

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

Staff Present: City Manager Kersnar, Assistant City Manager Rich, City Attorney Savaree, Public Works Director Davis, Community Development Director Ewing, City Clerk Cook.

Pledge of Allegiance

Led by City Clerk Cook.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Proclamation Congratulating the "Belmont Revolution" Soccer Team, 2004 Association Cup Winners.

Mayor Metropulos presented a proclamation congratulating the Belmont Revolution Soccer Team for winning the 2004 Association Cup soccer tournament. Team members presented the Mayor with a signed t-shirt and a photo of the team.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gail Gandolfi, Belmont Arts Council, announced ArtShare's upcoming fundraiser "Pot Party" on March 20, and invited Council to participate by decorating clay pots to be sold at the event. She provided each member with a clay pot with instructions, and stated she would return at the next council meeting to pick up their finished product.

Carol Hatfield, Friends of Belmont Library, announced that the Friends would be hosting an author night at the library on February 12, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. She stated that romance writers would be revealing secrets of writing romance novels.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Metropulos congratulated Carlmont High School for placing second in the annual Millard Fillmore Trivia Hunt. He noted that the team earned 484 out of 500 points. Councilmember Bauer stated that his daughter participated in this event.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Approval of meeting minutes: Regular Meetings of November 25, 2003, and January 13, 2004, and Special Meetings of January 21, 2004, January 23, 2004, and January 24, 2004.

Motion to waive reading of Ordinances.

Written Communication 1) FCC Reply to Opposition to Petition for Partial Reconsideration, In the Matter of Family Stations, Inc., Case No. CSR-6135-A, received January 9, 2004; 2) FCC Response to Reply to Opposition to Petition for Partial Reconsideration, In the Matter of Family Stations, Inc., Case No. CSR-6135-A, received January 26, 2004.

Approval of Resolution 9505 authorizing a Statement of Understanding between the City of Belmont and the American Red Cross, Bay Area Chapter, relative to establishing Mass Care Shelters in Belmont for victims of disaster.

Approval of Resolution 9506 Authorizing an Amendment to an Agreement between City of San Mateo and City of Belmont for Sanitary Sewer Main Connections and Charges.

Action: On a motion by Councilmember Warden, seconded by Councilmember Mathewson, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

HEARINGS

Public Hearing to Consider Amendments to Chapter 25, Belmont Municipal Code, Trees.

City Attorney Savaree reviewed the proposed modifications to the tree ordinance. She noted that language had been broadened to address the issues of in-lieu fees and the establishment and maintenance of trees. She explained that staff was seeking direction regarding the requirement of either 24-gallon or 36-inch box tree size. She added that the Parks and Recreation and Planning Commissions had reviewed these sections of this ordinance and had recommended a future review of the full ordinance.

City Attorney Savaree stated that the fee structure for tree replacement is part of the Master Fee Schedule, which would be reviewed and modified as part of the Budget process.

Mayor Metropulos opened the hearing.

Parks and Recreation Director Mittelstadt stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission had briefly discussed the ordinance, and that it would be brought back as a priority calendar item.

In response to Council questions, Parks and Recreation Director Mittelstadt described the various tree sizes, and stated that tree replacement was categorized in two areas: as part of a development, and replacement for other reasons. He clarified that the three-to-one replacement formula may result in too many trees on one parcel, and that staff would work with the property owner in those instances. He also clarified that trees could be planted in medians if an irrigation system was in place. He noted that staff would prefer a 24-inch tree requirement.

Action: On a motion by Councilmember Metropulos, seconded by Councilmember Bauer, the Public Hearing was unanimously closed by a show of hands.

Councilmember Mathewson stated that he would prefer to see a mixture of tree sizes.

Councilmember Bauer stated that the 24-inch tree requirement would provide for consistency.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that the purpose of these modifications was to create a separate fund, and that some of the fees seemed high, especially for non-protected species.

In response to a question from Councilmember Mathewson, Parks and Recreation Director Mittelstadt stated that tree removal fees are currently remitted to the General Fund as revenue. City Manager Kersnar clarified that a separate fund would be established as part of the implementation of the revised ordinance.

Action: On a motion by Councilmember Feierbach, seconded by Councilmember Mathewson, and unanimously approved by a show of hands, an ordinance Amending Chapter 25, Belmont Municipal Code, Trees, was introduced by title, amended to include the requirement for 24-inch box trees, further reading waived, and second reading and adoption set for February 24, 2004.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion and Direction regarding Code Enforcement Policy.

Code Enforcement Officer Buckman stated that the current Code Enforcement Policy was established in November of 2001 to deal with code enforcement issues. He reviewed the three priority levels of enforcement set out in this priority, and explained the procedures used in the administration of complaints. He noted that health and safety violations were a priority, and that 90 percent of complaints are resolved as a result of the first contact and within 15 days of the complaint.

Code Enforcement Officer Buckman stated that an outreach program was recently implemented through the neighborhood association meeting to address code enforcement, at which time a questionnaire was distributed. He noted that eight responses from the association presidents were received, along with responses from other interested persons. He reviewed the options available for changes to the code enforcement program, and noted that implementation of some of the options would result in additional fiscal impact.

Code Enforcement Officer Buckman explained that the City of Daly City has two code enforcement officers to serve a population of 90,000 to 100,000 citizens, and the City of San Mateo has three officers managing 300-400 cases per year. He noted that San Mateo may use Belmont's policy as a model for a future policy in that city.

Council discussion ensued.

In response to Council questions, Code Enforcement Officer Buckman clarified that prior to 2001, the City's code enforcement program was more aggressive, and there were more violations. He noted that this resulted in complaints of excessive enforcement, which led to the establishment of the current policy. He also noted that the police department handles street parking violations.

City Manager Kersnar clarified that police staff is proactive in reporting immediate health and safety violations.

In response to Councilmember Bauer, Code Enforcement Officer Buckman clarified that there was no set geographic pattern for violations, that they were spread throughout the City. He added that the equipment recently acquired through the code enforcement grant had just been received, and that staff would be able to assess its effectiveness at a later date.

Councilmember Warden stated that he supported an anonymous complaint process for violations visible from the public right-of-way, on a trial basis. He also stated he would support funding from the Redevelopment Agency for commercial properties

code enforcement in the RDA. He noted that an education process takes time and resources, and the targeted violators will not likely get educated.

Community Development Director Ewing stated that there were pros and cons for using an anonymous complaint system, and that it sometimes leads to a retribution problem between neighbors. He noted that code enforcement education is effective, regardless of the process used. He added that any investigation is time consuming, and that available resources are an issue. He noted that an anonymous hotline could generate more complaints than staff could manage.

Additional Council discussion ensued regarding the anonymous call process, code enforcement "sweeps", and the proposed "Rise and Shine" program being initiated by the Chamber of Commerce.

City Manager Kersnar stated that one "sweep"-based program at a time could be accomplished with available resources. He noted that this could clear violations and educate violators at the same time.

David Long, President, Central Neighborhood Association, stated that code enforcement was the central issue at the recent neighborhood association meeting. He noted that two of the options presented by staff were not very aggressive. He commended staff for its attempt to address code enforcement, and expressed concern regarding workload. He stated he would support an assessment of fines for habitual commercial violators as a way to fund additional enforcement staff. He also stated he would support a phone call process in addition to the existing written complaint process, and also supports educational programs.

Additional discussion ensued. Council concurred to make changes in code enforcement to include: 1) initiating a six-month trial for anonymous phone complaints, 2) moving egregious trash problems to level one enforcement (aggressive), and 3) continuing to work with the Chamber of Commerce on its code enforcement education program. These policy changes would be brought back for final approval.

Discussion and Direction regarding a Citywide Satisfaction Survey

Assistant City Manager Rich stated that the previous citywide survey was performed in 2002, and the recommendation at that time was to repeat the survey every two years as a way to measure customer service. He noted that the Permit Center was created as a result of the 2002 survey. He also noted that survey results could help during future budget cuts as a way to direct priorities. He stated there was a cost savings if the same vendor were used for the new survey.

In response to Council questions, Assistant City Manager Rich clarified that the users of city services were surveyed as part of the Performance Budgeting process, and that this two-year survey was random.

Councilmember Feierbach stated that she could not support the expenditure for this survey at this time.

Councilmember Mathewson stated he could not support the expenditure due to budget constraints, and he had concerns regarding the questions and process used during the previous survey.

Councilmember Warden stated that he supported surveying users of city services, and that it was important to get people's opinion, but he did not have strong feelings either way for a citywide survey.

Councilmember Bauer stated that he supported the survey as a way to help streamline city processes, which could help save money.

Mayor Metropulos stated that he supported the survey. He commented that it was a method to evaluate new programs, that every two years is appropriate using the 2002 survey as a baseline. He noted that many new programs and projects have been implemented since the last survey.

Action: On a motion by Councilmember Feierbach, seconded by Councilmember Mathewson, to delay initiation of a citywide survey to the next fiscal year and to continue city services-user surveys, was approved by a vote of 3-2 (Bauer, Metropulos no).

Update to the Technology Master Plan

Technology Services Manager Harnish stated that since the implementation of the Technology Master Plan in 1999, eleven of the twenty projects have been completed. She noted that the Technology Committee recently reviewed the remaining projects and made a recommendation for new priorities.

Technology Services Manager Harnish explained how the Tele-Voice Responder system works, and cited an example of scheduling permits without the necessity of human contact. She clarified that the software would be set up to prevent scheduling conflicts.

City Manager Kersnar stated that monies have been set aside each year to implement the Technology Plan, and funds were available to cover the short-term priorities

totalling \$292,000. He clarified that these were one-time expenditures, and that the programs were designed to improve efficiencies.

COUNCIL COMMENTS, cont.

Mayor Metropulos announced that Twin Pines Park would be featured on Channel 5's Evening Magazine on Friday, February 13, at 7:00 p.m. He also announced that the last day to register to vote for the March 2nd Primary was Tuesday, February 17.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 9:20 P.M.

Terri Cook

City Clerk

Meeting Tape Recorded & Videotaped

Tape #571